

CHRISTMAS EVE

Written by

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**EXT. THE ROOF OF ADA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

ADA (35) is sitting on the roof next to the chimney in her pajamas and smokes a cigarette. SANTA CLAUS is sitting next to her. The full moon is behind them. They are both silent.

SANTA  
Aren't you -

ADA  
- I did a long time ago.

SANTA  
Me too.

They are both silent.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Got one for me?

Ada pulls out a small zip loc bag from her pajama pocket, containing a few cigarettes and a lighter, and gives it to Santa.

Santa takes a cigarette, lights it, and passionately takes the first smoke.

They are both silent.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
So you are -

ADA  
- I'm excellent. Isn't it obvious?

SANTA  
Well -

ADA  
- You know, unlike you fairy tale creatures, when us humans feel good, we sit in our pajamas on a cold roof in the middle of the night and smoke cigarettes.

SANTA  
So now I'm a fairy tale creature!

They are both silent. Santa is angry that Ada is interrupting him.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Why don't you just do it? Go ahead, jump. What are you waiting for?

ADA  
You think I'm here because I plan  
to commit suicide?

SANTA  
Oh, no. You definitely don't look  
like someone sitting on a roof  
thinking about suicide.  
(beat)  
This is the perfect place to  
secretly smoke cigarettes and enjoy  
the moonlight.

Ada is silent.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
You thought I wouldn't come this  
year.

ADA  
It wouldn't be the first time.

**INT. A BEDROOM IN THE HOUSE ACROSS FROM ADA'S HOUSE - SAME**

JANE (60) sleeping in bed. JOHN (60) is in his pajamas with a Santa hat on his head and is standing by the window, and smoking a cigarette.

From John's point of view, we see Ada and Santa sit on the roof.

John takes a last drag from his cigarette and throws the butt into the glass of water on the window sill.

He walks over to the bed and lies down next to Jane.

JOHN  
Do you know that Santa is a smoker?

Jane answers without opening her eyes.

JANE  
Yup. And Elvis is not dead.

JOHN  
I knew about Elvis, but I just  
discovered Santa's secret.

Jane still talks without opening her eyes.

JANE  
Is she still sitting on the roof?

JOHN

Yes.

John closes his eyes with a smile on his face.

**EXT. THE ROOF OF ADA'S HOUSE - SAME**

Ada looks up at the sky.

ADA

It's funny. The sky is full of stars, but space itself is dark and cold.

SANTA

Not if you are close to the stars.

Ada looks thoughtfully at the sky.

ADA

I'm worried about a good friend of mine. She's really not well.

(beat)

She has constant nightmares that haunt her for a long time after. She feels she can't live with them anymore.

SANTA

Do I know her?

Ada does not answer his question.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I mean, I know a lot of kids.

(beat)

Because I'm Santa Claus.

ADA

You know her.

SANTA

Ah. Is she the one with the rag doll?

ADA

Yup.

Santa holds out his hand for a cigarette.

SANTA

If you give me one more, I'll tell  
you a story about a little girl and  
a rag doll.

Ada pulls the small plastic sandwich bag with cigarettes and  
a lighter out of her pocket and gives it to Santa Claus.

Santa takes another cigarette and lights it.

SANTA (CONT'D)

The story is called Christmas Eve.

(beat)

Once upon a time, in a land far  
away, there lived a blue-eyed  
beauty named -

ADA

- no name, just describe her.

SANTA

As you wish, my dear. So -

ADA

- you don't have to do everything  
from the beginning. Just keep  
telling the story.

SANTA

If you keep interrupting me -

ADA

- I know you love it when I  
interrupt you.

SANTA

Do you really believe what you  
said?

ADA

Absolutely! Interrupting means that  
I am paying attention. This is how  
I show respect for your effort. And  
you know that when I interrupt you,  
your stories are always different.  
Interrupting you means it takes  
longer to tell the story. And I  
know you won't admit it, but you  
like the fact this means you get to  
stay with me longer.

Santa Claus smiles.

SANTA

So that blue-eyed beauty had a husband whom she loved very much -

ADA

- Did he love her?

SANTA

She was the love of his life. They had two wonderful children. She loved her job and was very successful at it. She had a big house with a swimming pool, three cars in the garage, and a life filled with joy and happiness. But just when she thought her life was like a fairy tale, one day, she had a bad dream.

ADA

Bad dream or nightmare?

SANTA

Is there a difference?

ADA

Of course there's a difference! Bad dreams come and go, but nightmares can change your life.

SANTA

Well -

ADA

- did that bad dream significantly change her life?

SANTA

It did. Didn't I say that a little while ago?

ADA

Yes, you are. But you tried to embellish it as if it is a fairy tale, but it is a drama. You don't have to embellish the story like that. I'm not a seven-year-old kid anymore.

SANTA

No, you're not a kid. You're a mother of two sitting on the roof, secretly smoking and talking to Santa Claus.

They are both silent.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Can I continue now?

ADA  
Yeah.

SANTA  
These... nightmares occurred every few months. As time passed, they became more frequent, to the point where the blue-eyed beauty no longer knew whether she lived in reality or in her nightmares. Her life was destroyed. She lost her job. Her husband left and took the children.

ADA  
Stay away from losers, huh?

SANTA  
Actually, her husband still loved her immensely but could no longer allow their children to watch their mother lose her mind. She still had a house, but no longer a home. She still had a car but no longer a road to follow. She couldn't think of a single thing worth living for.

ADA  
What a crappy world we live in.

SANTA  
On the contrary, everyone tried to help her escape the clutches of those demons from her nightmares.

ADA  
What about her nightmares? You didn't really say anything about them.

SANTA  
Well --

ADA  
- you always fail to tell me the most important details.  
(MORE)

ADA (CONT'D)

I keep wondering if you think I'm not intelligent enough to understand or if you are trying to protect me just like my mother did.

SANTA

Your mother is -

ADA

- Finish the story.

SANTA

The nightmares that haunted the blue-eyed beauty were the twisted memories of a traumatic childhood event.

ADA

So cliché.

SANTA

The blue-eyed beauty was born in the middle of a war, and it raged on until she was nine. Her father went to fight and didn't come back. She never got over it. When she grew up, she and her mother left to start a new life in a new country.

ADA

You can run from a place, but you can't run from your past.

SANTA

Well, at first she believed she had succeeded. Eventually, though, her nightmares forced her right back to that Christmas Eve during the war. Over and over again.

(beat)

The ghosts of her past destroyed her life, and she ended up alone.

They are both silent.

ADA

You're a liar.

SANTA

Oh, so now I'm a fairy tale creature AND a liar!



ADA

I am grateful to my mother for devoting her life to raising me as a good person. But she also did a lot of stuff wrong, thinking she was protecting me.

(beat)

I never lied to my children. And not only that, I never kept silent about some truths that might have been painful for them. Yes. The pain can be overwhelming at first. It can even leave scars, but the pain will pass someday. Not knowing the truth can cost you your life. The unspoken truth is very often much worse than a lie. Though even with lies, it's not always the lie itself that's the problem. It's the damage that comes as a result of the lie.

SANTA

Like the truth. If you are not able to accept it.

They are both silent.

ADA

I always looked forward to the gifts you brought on Christmas Eve. But instead of cookies and carols, you spent the whole evening telling me what to do and what not to do, how should I behave at school, how should I act on the street, what books should I read, and what TV shows I shouldn't watch.

SANTA

You were a damn good listener. I was very proud of you for that.

ADA

Of course I was. Because your life coaching was like parody of a bad sitcom.

Santa Claus laughs. Ada finds herself in a much better mood as well.

ADA (CONT'D)

Do you remember what you told me about fast food?

SANTA

Yup! If you keep eating it, you'll grow a mustache and a tail on your ass.

ADA

I believed you! Every time I ate a burger, I ran straight home to the bathroom and watched for half an hour to see if my mustache had started to grow.

(beat)

But every time I tried to tell you what was really bothering me, you interrupted me and told jokes and said that you have to go because other children are also waiting for presents.

SANTA

I was just trying -

ADA

- to protect me from the truth? You obviously failed.

(beat)

But you can redeem yourself tonight. Tell me the truth about my friend. You tell me so I can tell her. Maybe you'll end up saving her life.

Santa Claus takes a deep breath and continues the story.

SANTA

A blue-eyed beauty sat by the window that Christmas Eve in the middle of the war and waited. She was waiting for her father. He promised her that whatever happened, he would come on Christmas Eve to meet Santa Claus together with her.

ADA

Did he keep his promise?

Santa Claus is silent.

SANTA

Santa Claus came earlier that year and -

ADA

Answer my question.

SANTA

No. Her father didn't come home, but he had Santa bring her a special gift. It was a rag doll that her father had made himself for his blue-eyed beauty.

Ada is trying not to cry.

ADA

Maybe he got the dates mixed up. Maybe he forgot.

SANTA

No, I know that guy. He always keeps his promises. Especially the one he makes to his princess.

ADA

It was a war. Maybe he was -

SANTA

- that evening the city was full of soldiers. People were scared and didn't leave their houses. A masked soldier knocked on the door of the blue-eyed beauty's home. He had to take her and her mother to a nearby church. The only thing she managed to bring with her was the rag doll she got from her father earlier that night. The blue-eyed beauty and her mother spent several days imprisoned in that church. When the gunfire and sounds of falling bombs finally stopped, the church doors opened, and people went outside. Their city was utterly destroyed. The bodies of dead soldiers on the streets. The buildings all around them were burning -

ADA

- my friend's dream ends in the church. She never manages to get out. That's the worst part of her dream because she never found out what happened after the soldiers left her town.

SANTA

The blue-eyed beauty and her mother returned to their house. A bomb had fallen on it and completely destroyed it and --

ADA

- so the soldier who took her and her mother to that church actually saved their lives?

SANTA

Yes.

ADA

Who was that soldier?

Santa thinks about whether or not to answer.

SANTA

It was her father.

Ada is in shock.

SANTA (CONT'D)

The only way to save them was to disguise himself as an enemy soldier and take them to the only safe place in the city. When he was sure the blue-eyed beauty and her mother were safe, he had to leave the city quickly.

ADA

And he never came back.

They are both silent.

SANTA

Now you know the whole story about the girl with the rag doll. I hope your friend won't have any more nightmares when you tell her what really happened that Christmas Eve.

ADA

Thank you for telling me the truth.

SANTA

I really do have to go.

ADA

I know.

(beat)

(MORE)

ADA (CONT'D)

I always knew that when you finally told me the truth, it would be the last time we would meet.

SANTA

You are a big girl now. You don't need Santa anymore.

(beat)

And don't worry about that friend of yours, she'll be fine.

The silence of the night is interrupted by what sounds like multiple gunshots. First, a few single pops, then a burst of crackling, then a few single pops again. It is fireworks.

We see beautiful fireworks in the sky above Ada's house.

**INT. ADA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME**

Ada stands by the window and watches the fireworks. She holds an old rag doll in her arms.

We hear the front doorbell. Ada starts as if wakened from a dream.

She goes to the door and opens it.

Her HUSBAND and two SONS are at the door. The older son carries a small decorated table-top Christmas tree, and the younger son holds a colorfully-wrapped gift.

The children run into Ada's arms.

Ada and her husband look tenderly at each other.

HUSBAND

We have a surprise guest for you tonight.

The husband moves aside, and Ada's MOTHER enters the house.

The two look at each other waiting to see who will make the first move.

Ada approaches and hugs her mother.

MOTHER

I am sorry.

ADA

I know everything.

Her mother looks at her questioningly.

ADA (CONT'D)  
He told me.

MOTHER  
Who told you?

ADA  
My guardian angel.

**EXT. THE STREET IN FRONT OF ADA'S HOUSE - SAME**

The fireworks are still going on. We see Santa sitting alone on the roof of Ada's house. He is waving to someone.

We see John in his pajamas with a Santa hat on his head at his bedroom window. He waves back at Santa.

JOHN  
Get going, old man. There are still  
so many kids waiting for you.

We cut back to Ada's house and the fireworks above it. But Santa Claus is gone.

THE END